



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
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August 9, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.  
Director

SUBJECT: **NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO ENTER INTO SOLE SOURCE  
CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH DIDI HIRSCH MENTAL HEALTH  
CENTER**

This memo is to comply with the Board of Supervisors Policy Manual, Section 5.100, Sole Source contract. It is the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's (DMH's) intent to amend its current agreement with Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center (Didi Hirsch) to implement a two-year pilot project, Project 60 Women and Children (P-60 W&C) to provide mental health, health, substance abuse, and residential services to vulnerable chronically homeless mentally ill women with children in the San Fernando Valley.

In recent years, Los Angeles County has collaborated with governmental and non-governmental agencies to implement creative and innovative programs that address homelessness, such as Project 50 in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles. However, chronically homeless individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse disorders and/or complex medical conditions continue to live on the streets, under freeway bridges, and in encampments, parks, or temporary shelters in areas throughout the County. This includes mentally ill women with children.

As part of the effort to meet the critical needs of these individuals, DMH, in coordination with the Third District, plans to expand services at Didi Hirsch to implement P-60 W&C a pilot program to provide integrated health, mental health, substance abuse, and residential services for homeless seriously mentally ill women with children, with capacity for thirty (30) women at any given time.

Over the course of the two-year period, the project and associated administration costs will be funded with County General Funds approved by the Board of Supervisors as part of the County's Homeless Prevention Initiative to fund homeless services. The project total for both fiscal years is \$1,217,412, funded with \$907,886 of Third Supervisorial District Homeless Services funding and \$309,526 of Federal Financial Participation Medi-Cal.

This two-year pilot project will be based at Via Avanta, Didi Hirsch's current women's residential substance abuse treatment program in Pacoima. The project is designed to work with a total of approximately sixty (60) parenting, pregnant, or childless women, including up to ten (10) veterans, and one hundred (100) children over the two-year period. Adult participants will learn to understand and manage their disorders, become more effective as parents, gain stable housing, and attain personal, and vocational goals. Specialized programming will address veterans' distinct needs. Children will get "back on track" developmentally and emotionally and will develop healthier attachments to their mothers. In addition to on-site mental health and substance abuse treatment, families will receive medical care from Westside Family Health Center's visiting Mobile Medical Unit, as well as off-site specialty care at Northeast Valley Health Corporation, the local Federally Qualified Healthcare Center (FQHC). The goal is for all participants to be rapidly transitioned to permanent housing within six months.

Didi Hirsch is uniquely qualified to provide these services because it has a long history as a provider for DMH, Department of Public Health's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, and Department of Children and Family Services. The agency was a partner with the County in Project 50 and is familiar with the challenges of homeless individuals who struggle with mental illness and substance abuse. In addition, the agency is a leader in treatment of abused/traumatized children and understands the challenges of children in kin/fostercare, which will be the living situation of some P-60 W&C kids. It has an existing women's residential treatment program in Pacoima that can quickly be adapted to accommodate this pilot program,

Unless otherwise instructed by a Board office within two weeks, DMH will proceed with preparing a sole source contract amendment. DMH will work closely with the Office of the County Counsel and the Chief Executive Office in preparing a contract amendment with Didi Hirsch.

MJS:RK:MM:mm

c: Health Deputies  
Chief Executive Officer  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
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